

TOWN TATTTLER

Vol 5 - Issue 6





Laura Bergin

In 1988, Laura Bergin made history by becoming the first female club secretary in the GAA in Ireland, serving here in Portlaoise. While she'll tell you herself that she didn't play much, the GAA was always in her blood. Her father, Billy Bergin, was a well-known footballer with both Park and Laois.

Today, Laura continues to give her time to the club, focusing on archiving and club history alongside fellow stalwarts like Teddy Fennelly Snr, Brian Delaney, and Dennis Tynan.

Laura shares some memories from over the years. We hope you enjoy the read.

First involvements in GAA

I had no interest in GAA or any other sports and only went to help out Margaret Conroy, who wanted to start a Ladies Football team. When she first asked, I said no but then said look I'll be the goal till you get somebody to take my place and that was the deal and exactly what happened.

Administration

I then took the job as Chairperson and Margaret did Secretary, and Anne Byrne was Treasurer. We asked the club if we could use a pitch, and they were very accommodating. They let us use the dressing rooms too. Peadar Molloy's wife, Liz, washed the Jerseys.

Playing Career cut short – but a love of the game was born!

We ran an American Tea Party to raise funds for the jerseys. I only played about 2 games, and then Paula Kelly took over. However, it was a year that changed my life and love for the games with both the senior and minor teams winning the county finals. Fantastic excitement all round. We had a great Sports Day and wheel of fortune, etc. organised by Jas for everybody in the town. The ladies set up a number of 7-a-side teams, and Margaret and I visited all the housing

estates and factories to see if anybody else would be interested. Ursula O Malley entered one from Beladd.

Funny Memories

I remember we organised a fancy dress with funny names like The Unsquashables, and we were The Slippery Diddies (we wore bras on our backs) - probably unprintable now!! All of this created a great atmosphere between the girls, and it wasn't long before the lads joined in the club activities with us eg. indoor circuit training in winter and table tennis in the hall.

One St Stephens Day Ollie Plunkett organised a basketball blitz in the club with pin the tail on the donkey. I was on a team with Bill Phelan, and we played Clonad, all the tall Norton men. At one stage, Bill swung around and whack I had a broken nose. Ned Murphy was there, thank God, and he looked after me. "*Not much point going to the hospital with that*", he said, so it was ice and 2 black eyes instead!

Great Nights in the GAA Centre

Cheddar and Co organised some great nights like *The Crazy Hat Night*, which Peter Fennell and I won. Also the *Toga Party* night and *Bogman's Ball* and finished it with *The Wild Auld Night* a comedy sketch on stage with Micky Bohane, Madness Maher, John Styles, Frank McGowan, Pat Critchley and Bush Dollard to name a few.

Aslan & Co..

I moved over to the Catering Section, which Dick Sides had nabbed me for and ordered the food, did up the bills, and catered for Laois Teams four nights a week along with Margaret and Anne. The bigger panel catered for 21sts, wedding anniversaries, funerals, and even a wedding. Cheddar organised big bands to play, which the three of us girlies catered for, the likes of *In Tua Nua*, *The Hot House Flowers*, and *Aslan* to name a few.



Laura Bergin circa 1988

Secretary

So you see, I was more on that side of it than the football, which, by the way, I had come to love. Pity I hadn't been involved in any sport when younger. It was when the football girls decided to go to the AGM, to see what took place, that my life too would change as one of the women - totally without my knowledge - shouted out my name when vote came for Ass Sec. I was stuck to the floor with only seconds to decide. Well, I suppose I had been a secretary all my working life and it can't be much different, so I said yes.

Museum in the GAA Centre

This led to my being asked to organise a museum with people not involved in the club and how exciting was this.



Laura Bergin Secretary and Organiser of the Club Museum in 1987 along with Kevin Croke former Portlaoise great of the 30s and 40s and Councillor (now TD) Willie Aird with John Gorman in the left background

I travelled the town from house to house for photos, medals, and any other memorabilia. So many people volunteered like my dad, Billy, Uncle Larry McEvoy, and PJ Nealon to paint it. Jim Lawlor made the gorgeous display cabinet. Micky Bohane, and Paddy Haslam made up the large frames for the photos to be displayed.

Greats like Kevin Croke donated a medal belonging to his uncle Tim Fennelly, Paddy Conroy (Ballyfin), another medal, Jack Delaney, his boots, and a very precious football that had a pigs bladder and was laced up - one of the earliest types of football that was made. The Christian Brothers came back for the opening night to recall pupils they taught,

and players from all over the country came to meet old friends and teammates. We had no shortage of trophies won by our teams that year, and old and young came together to celebrate the night with music for the older people who liked to waltz till 11pm, and there was a pop band for the youth.

The meaning of Club

It's so very, very important to achieve and display a history of the wonderful accolades won by our club in all genres and ages. As the famous saying goes "if you have no history, you have no past" Being part of a club is part of it's history - no matter what capacity you are involved with, be it a player,

manager, trainer, selector, volunteer etc. It tells a story of how the games themselves have changed and developed over the years, how the methods of training have changed, how everything is analysed in dept now, whether that be for better or worse, how involving children from a very young age is a fantastic outlet for them to both develop themselves physically and to make friends and have fun. They look up to their own heroes who play the game. They now play, and the archives might even see their own family members there. We always say Club is family. We have pride in who we are as a club. We work together, play together, laugh and cry together but the club's there when you need it.

Early Heroes

Jack O'Shea, and Eamon Whelan (the only 2 men I've ever seen turn their back to a goal post and score points) and John O'Leary Dublin Goalie. I admired John so much that I actually drove to Moate in Westmeath alone when the Dubs were playing and sat on the grass bank behind the goals watching him. I well remember Tommy Conroy, Barney Rock, and Brian Mullins, and I loved Kieran Duff as he was that bit dirty. As I was in goals at the time myself, I suppose I appreciated John's job.

People I admire

Sean Boylan, the Meath trainer. Kieran McGeeney from Armagh. Mícheál Ó Muirheartaigh the Kerry Commentator.

Most memorable match seen

Laois winning the National Football League in 1986 against Monaghan.

One to forget

Laois losing to Wicklow in Aughrim in 1986.

Hopes for the Club for the Future

For another Club All-Ireland to be won, and for generations to come to enjoy, take pride in and be part of our wonderful club



and for them to have the wonderful memories of it we have.

Favourite Expression

"That's Life" - Esther Rantzen. (or 'That's shocking' or 'Old Magoo you done it again'

Wise words

'If you want a job done right do it yourself' or 'longest way round is the shortest way home' or 'Enjoy life, don't worry about what people think or say about you, they'll think and say it anyway so have fun, smile when your feel low and get up and get out, you only have one life, live it and enjoy it'.

Funny story

Well a very famous Portlaoise and Laois hurler/footballer came to one of the fancy dress nights in the old club house. He was later found by Dick Sides R.I.P. more than a little under the weather, shall we say, up in the Museum. Dick came back down and said to Tommy Keogh R.I.P. who was on the door. *"God Tommy what's the world coming to! There's a nurse up in the Museum fast asleep snoring her head off."*

Or we had people watching Eddie Kinsella one night getting very frustrated playing pool. Couldn't understand what was wrong with the black ball it was barely moving. Seems Joe Ryan had a metal ball painted black and had replaced it on the table for the craic!

Other sports I enjoy to watch

I love table tennis and boxing especially heavy weight and of course Katie Taylor. I also like showjumping, Rugby, and the 100 meter sprint in athletics.

Other teams I support

Kerry in football, I thought Meath or Mayo might achieve something over the past few years but no.

Dad

I remember my dad brought me up to practice one day, and

the ball was wet, and he sent in a drop kick to me. I saved it, but he had kicked it so hard it really really hurt my hands. I wasn't impressed. He roared laughing and said *"now next time you'll jump for it, it won't hurt if your off the ground"*

Dad played for Park and Laois along with the great Tommy Murphy, Jack Kenna, Mick Haughney Paddy Dunne etc.



The 1952 & 1953 back to back winning Park Football team. Billy Bergin second from right in the middle row

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Jack Delaney

I used to have chats with Jack Delaney when Laois were going for the League Final. I used to fill out his tickets for the draw for him on a Thursday night *"here Sec come over here I've a job for you"*, he'd say.

He loved John Costello and his high fielding. Of course, Jack played on the 1926 League Team that won, and here we were in 1986.

Love for Football

I was over at a special presentation night for the great Tommy Murphy in the Glenside Pub in Killeshin. He wasn't well at the time with cancer, and dad wanted me to drive him. Lots of the old timers of Laois greats there that night, and I had the pleasure of shaking hands with him. Jack Kenna only died quite recently. So, I suppose that's where I got my love of football more so than hurling.

Fantastic teams like Kerry, Meath and Dublin being are such a joy to watch and there were so many great players on those teams that we still talk about today.





Club Summer Camps

We have two camps in Rathleague over the coming months.

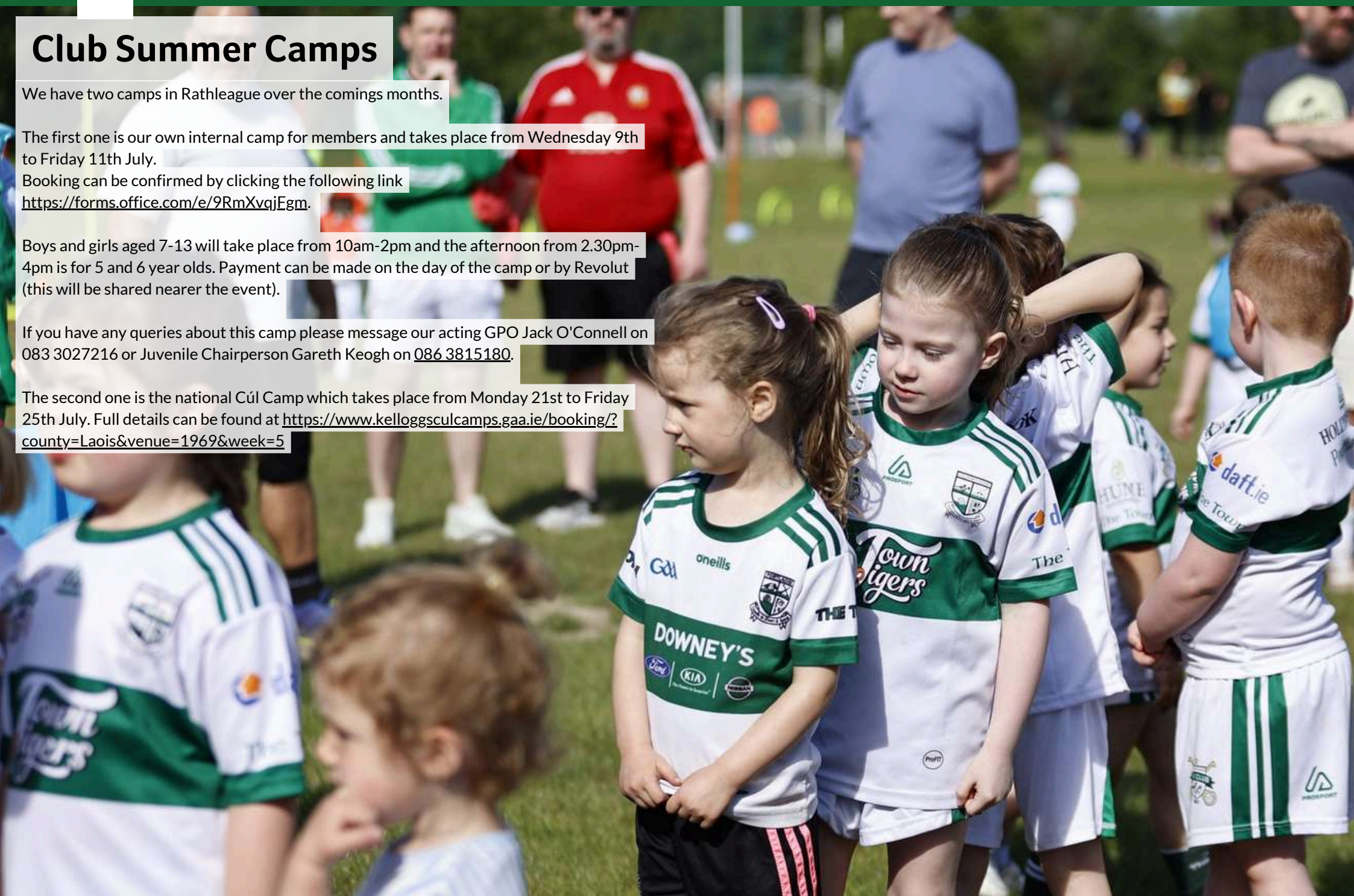
The first one is our own internal camp for members and takes place from Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th July.

Booking can be confirmed by clicking the following link
<https://forms.office.com/e/9RmXvqjFgm>.

Boys and girls aged 7-13 will take place from 10am-2pm and the afternoon from 2.30pm-4pm is for 5 and 6 year olds. Payment can be made on the day of the camp or by Revolut (this will be shared nearer the event).

If you have any queries about this camp please message our acting GPO Jack O'Connell on 083 3027216 or Juvenile Chairperson Gareth Keogh on [086 3815180](tel:0863815180).

The second one is the national Cúl Camp which takes place from Monday 21st to Friday 25th July. Full details can be found at <https://www.kelloggsculcamps.gaa.ie/booking/?county=Laois&venue=1969&week=5>





Town Tigers



SUMMER CAMP

LEARN TO PLAY THE TOWN WAY
GAELIC FOOTBALL, HURLING AND
CAMOGIE CAMP FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
BORN 2019/2020 AGED 5 AND 6

3 Days of Fun. Wednesday to Friday - 2.30pm to 4.00pm.

Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie.

Lead by Club GPO Jack O'Connell.

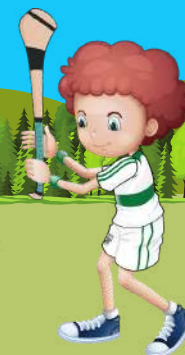
Family Discount - 2 children €30. Children must be club members.



Town g SUMMER CAMP 9TH-11TH JULY

€ 40

Learn to Play The Town Way
Gaelic Football, Hurling and
Camogie camp for Boys & Girls
born 2012/2018 aged 7 to 13



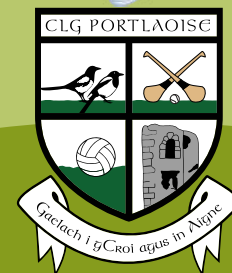
Wednesday to Friday - 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie.

Lead by Club GPO Jack O'Connell.

Family Discount €70 for two children, €90 for 3 or more .

Children must be club members.



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Music & Arts Weekend

FOREST FEST

July 25 - 27 Emo Village, Laois 2025

Philip Meagher the promoter of **Forest Fest** in Emo over the weekend of the 25th of July next has created a 25 percent discount code for members and families of Portlaoise GAA club for all ticket purchases.

It is valid for **14 days** from the **26th of June**.

Use the code **Portlgaa** or this [link](#)



A massive well done to the Laois hurlers on winning the 2025 Celtic Challenge Division 3 final earlier this month, lifting the Corn William Robinson Cup for the second year in a row. It was brilliant to see strong Portlaoise involvement again this year, with Shane Carroll, Oisín McRedmond, David Delaney, Ryan Haslam, and Tiernan Lawless all toging out, and Bobby O'Connor, who plays football with us, also part of the squad. Special mention too for Eoghan Lonergan, part of the coaching team. Well done to everyone involved. The club is very proud of your efforts and achievements

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Walk For The Town 2025

Thanks to everyone who made Walk for the Town 2025 a great success. Each section of the club was represented and the leaders worked hard to drive engagement within their teams.

Some of our far flung, but closely connected, ex-pats helped us out with some middle of the night walks.

Thanks to Mickey Bohane, Cian Taylor, Niall Gleeson and Scott Lawless in USA, Dubai and Australia. Great to see ye taking part guys.

We are delighted to be able to help our Town All Stars as part of this fundraising initiative. A special group of people who help define the meaning of club.

Special thanks to our organisers, our leaders, everyone who walked and everyone who sold lines, and who donated. Without your help it would be very difficult to run our club.





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Walk For The Town 2025





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Walk For The Town 2025





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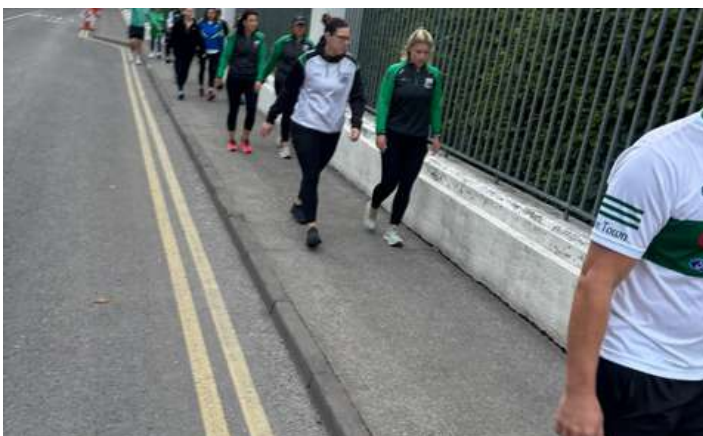
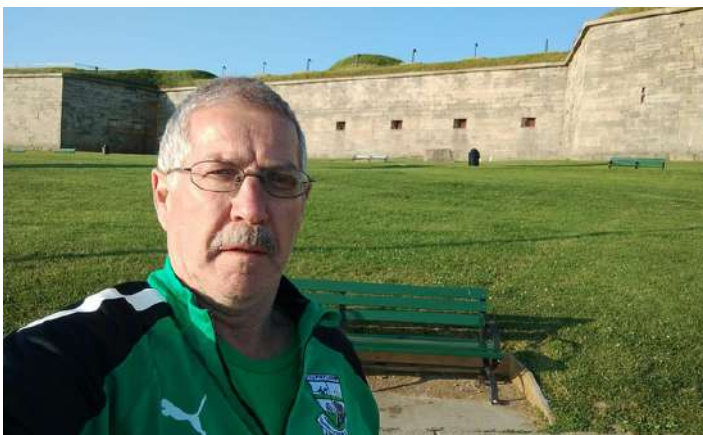
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Walk For The Town 2025





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Walk For The Town 2025





Walk For The Town 2025





Walk For The Town 2025





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Around The Club This Month





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Family Fun Day 2025





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Family Fun Day 2025





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Family Fun Day 2025



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Family Fun Day 2025





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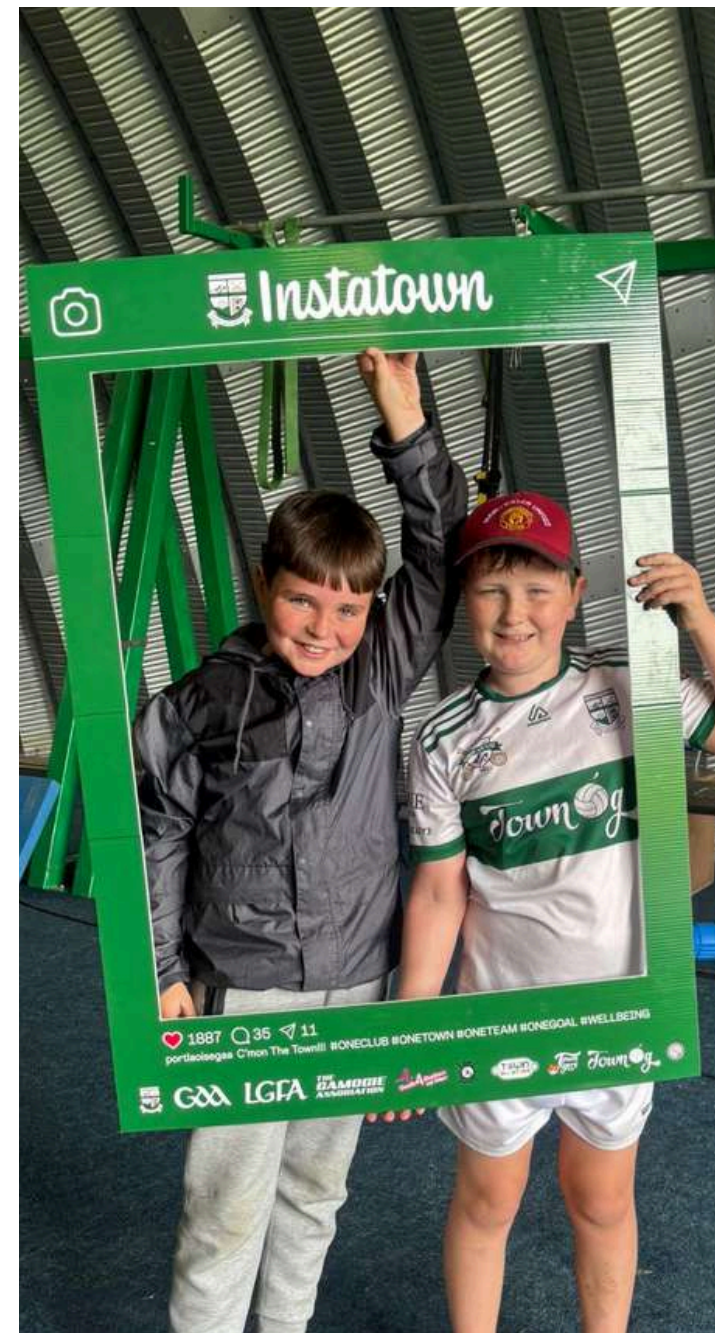
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Family Fun Day 2025





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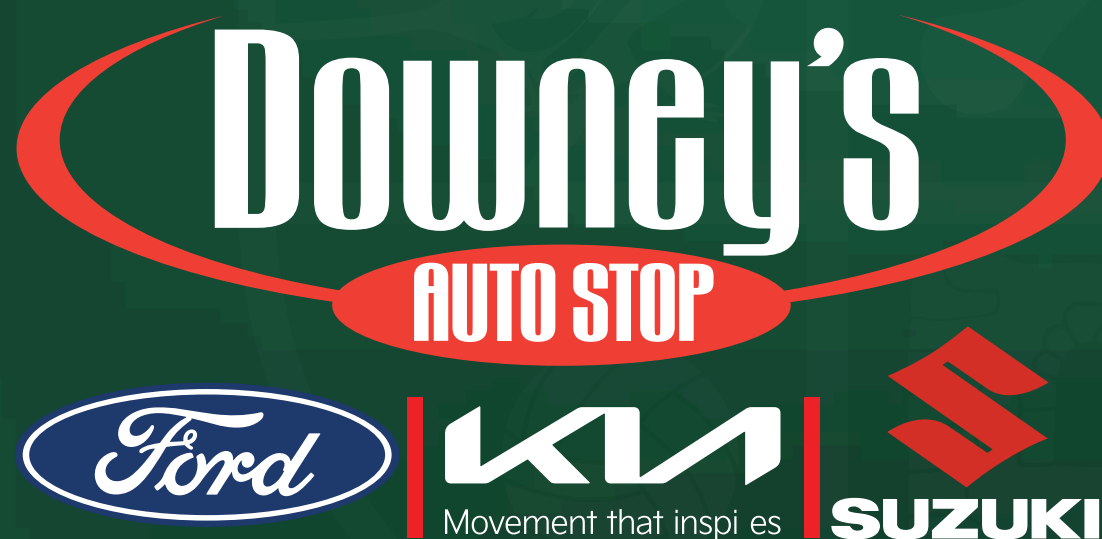
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Family Fun Day 2025



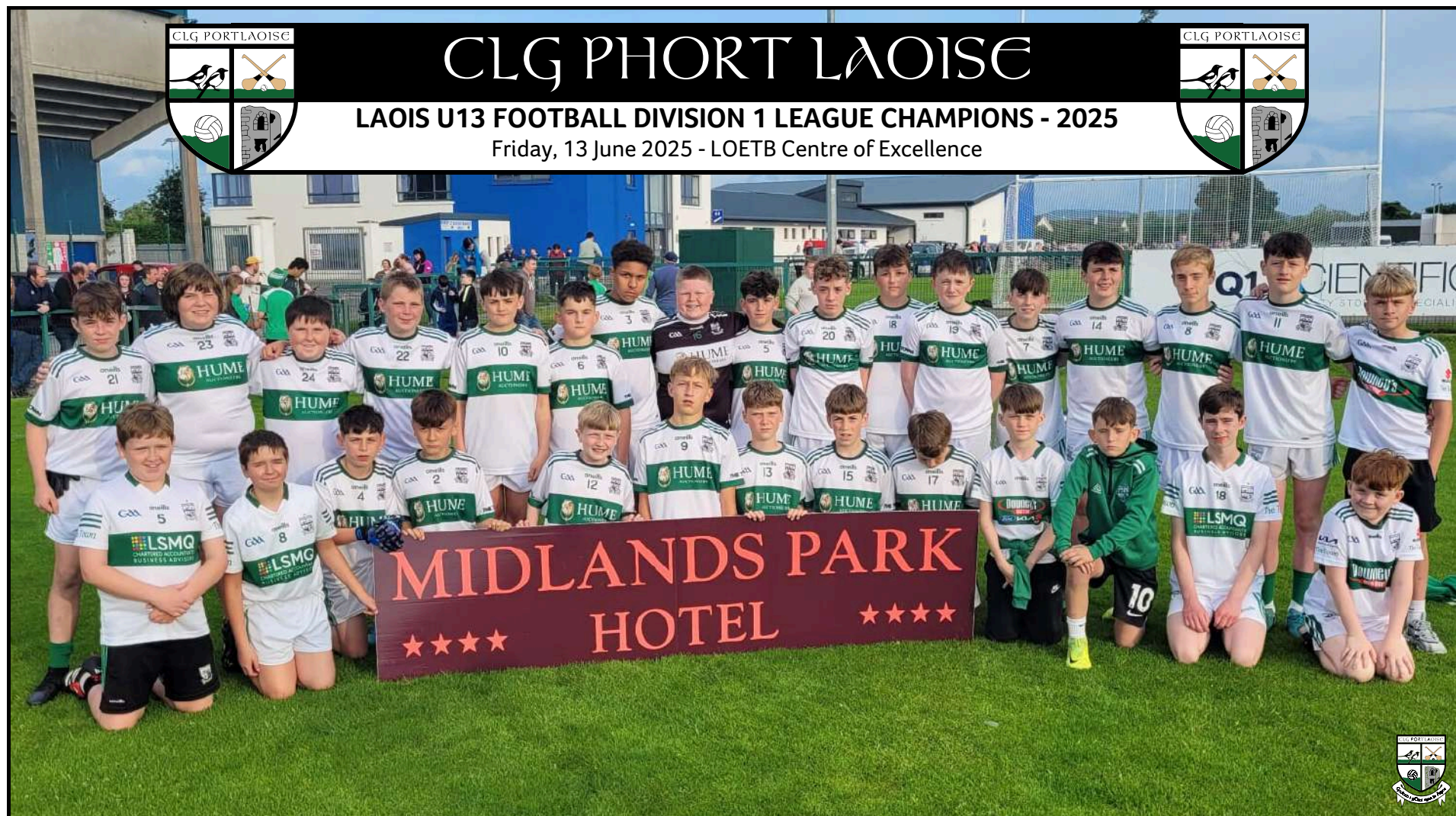


Adult Section Title Sponsors of CLG Phort Laoise for 2025



**JACKPOT
THIS WEEK
€17,300**

Your support makes a real difference.
Go here to play and support the club.



Portlaoise 6-9 v 3-10 Na Fianna Óg

Back (l. to r.): Conor Kavanagh, Harry O'Dwyer, Adam Keogh, Eoin McNamara, Padraig Fox, Tom Priede, Tyrone Okafor, Danny Kerry, Harry Marum, Logan Peters Fitzpatrick, Fionn Trotman, Sam York, Ronan O'Gorman, Lorcan McBride, Ned Fox, Tyler Whelan, Sam Brown;
 Front (l. to r.): Max Green, Ivan Perepecajs, Aiden Scully, Lennon Brown, Zac Bowe, Mikuss Simmons (Capt.), Noah Clear, Tadgh Bohan, Finn Byrne, Conor Fitzgerald (mascot), Sean Daly (mascot), Sam Breen, Dylan Fitzgerald (mascot);

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U10 LGFA Go Games Activity Day in Croke Park

Huge congratulations to our U10 girls who represented Portlaoise in the Go Games Activity Day earlier this month

Playing in Croke Park is a dream come through and the girls certainly made their mark on the hallowed turf. They played games with clubs from all corners of the Country and represented their families, coaches and our club with the highest of regard.

It was an unforgettable experience and lifelong memories were created. Well done to everyone involved.



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U10 LGFA Go Games Activity Day in Croke Park



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U10 LGFA Go Games Activity Day in Croke Park



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 8



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 9



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 10



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 11



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 12



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13



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Juvenile Scene This Month - Under 13







UNDER 5 AGE GROUP

SUNDAYS - 10AM - 11AM

Boys and Girls born in 2020

Gaelic Football, Hurling & Camogie.

CLG Phort Laoise,
Rathleague,
Portlaoise.

R32 Y190

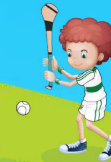
All equipment provided.

HAVE FUN

BE PART
OF A TEAM

BE ACTIVE

MAKE FRIENDS



**Learn the skills of Gaelic Football, Hurling & Camogie.
Develop the fundamental movement skills which are the**

foundation skills across all sports.

For further information contact

Adrian @ 087 992 8089



LGFA
LADIES GAEIC FOOTBALL



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógachta



UNDER 6 AGE GROUP

SUNDAYS - 10AM - 11AM

Boys and Girls born in 2019

Gaelic Football, Hurling & Camogie.

Portlaoise GAA Club,
Rathleague,
Portlaoise,
R32 Y160
All equipment provided.

HAVE FUN

BE PART
OF A TEAM

BE ACTIVE

MAKE FRIENDS

Learn the skills of Gaelic Football, Hurling & Camogie.
Develop the fundamental movement skills which are the
foundation skills across all sports.

For further information contact
Dermot Costelloe 087 983 3343
Eimear Holland 086 259 3334



**THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION**
An Cumann Camógaloichta



LGFA
LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL



CHOOSING THE RIGHT HURL SIZE

The game of hurling and camogie has changed hugely over the past 20/30 years and adult players are now using hurls that are 3/4 inches shorter.

Most adult players would measure themselves by standing up straight with shoulders square. Then gripping the hurl at the top, just under the handle, the hurl would be just above/touching the ground.

Essentially the length of the hurl is the distance from their wrist bone to the ground. In general this would be the maximum size hurl an adult player would use and many would even use a size smaller.

For underage players it is best to have the hurl an inch or two off the ground. Unlike adult players, they have not got the same wrist and arm strength relative to their height. Therefore the measurement we take is from the wrist bone to the ankle bone.

If children are in between sizes it is always best to choose the smaller size. It is crucial that young players have hurls that are light and short so that they can learn the skills of the game without developing bad habits.

We wouldn't expect the children to play football in boots that are 2 sizes too big, and it is just as important that they don't use hurls that are 2 inches too long.

WRIST

ANKLE



THE
CAMOGIE
ASSOCIATION



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Movember Mental Health Workshop

A big thank you to Joanna Quinn and Damian Sheridan for delivering the Help Out a Mate workshop last night with our camogie girls, as part of the Movember **Ahead of the Game** programme in conjunction with the GAA and GPA.

The session helped the group recognise the signs of anxiety and depression in others, provided a practical toolkit for supporting friends, and shared useful resources they can use themselves or pass on.

The girls were introduced to the ALEC model: Ask, Listen, Encourage Action, Check In. They were encouraged to go home and be “Smart **ALEC**’s”.

The workshop struck a great balance between energy, games, and important conversations. It also covered how it’s completely normal for our feelings to fluctuate during the day and highlighted the importance of checking in with ourselves and others.

Hopefully we’ll run more of these workshops in the future!





An raibh tú sa Ghaeltacht riamh?

Were you in the Gaeltacht before?

Bhí mé....chaith mé trí seachtaine ag freastal coláiste ghaeilge ar an Oileán Chléire ó chósta Chorcaigh.

I was....I spent three weeks attending Irish college on Cape Clear Island off the Cork coast.

Cad a bhí ar siúl agat gach lá?

What did you do each day?

CIORCAL COMHRÁ MEITHEAMH

JUNE USEFUL PHRASES

Bhí ranganna againn gach maidin agus bhí cluichí againn gach iarnóin.

We had classes each morning and we had games every afternoon.

Gach oíche bhí céilí againn.

Every night we had a céilí.

Go minic bhí seans againn chun snámh sa chuan.

We often got the chance to go swimming in the harbour.

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Thanks to everyone who supports our fundraising efforts through the Town Lotto (day to day running costs), and Club Bingo (development). It is greatly appreciated.

If you have any feedback in relation to the newsletter, or if you would like to contribute to it, please contact info@portlaoisegaa.ie